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BRUCE GOLDEN

THE BEACH BOYS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PASTORAL

A Newcastle/Borgo Press Original

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Popular Music of Today

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THE BEACH BOYS

Southern California Pastoral

by Bruce Golden

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PREFACE and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book discusses *The Beach Boys'* music. It is not a biography. I have tried to indicate the value of their music, as well as their importance to the rest of rock 'n' roll, rock music, and its culture. Because the group continues to perform, no critical judgment can be comprehensive. Far from being the last word on The Beach Boys, this book is only an introduction. However, midway into the 1970s, when they are probably as popular as they have ever been, appears to be as good a place as any to try to assess their importance to contemporary American music and culture.

My interest in the Beach Boys could not have developed beyond mere curiosity without the help of several astute and knowledgeable friends to whom I am obliged. Al Del Gigante first suggested their importance; Charles Yates shared with me not only his interest in their music, but especially his abundant record collection. I have borrowed many ideas about their songs from Arnold Arias. George Thompson clarified much specialized local California lore, and Mike Burgess has supported this effort from its beginning. It should go without saying that no one besides myself is responsible for any errors that remain.

BG

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Beach Boys are still one of the most accomplished and undervalued groups working in rock music today. Their style defies classification, and their distinctive sound and outlook, which began as smooth, polished, suburban high-school surfing music, has grown to the point where, in the group's *Holland* LP (1973), their "California saga" combines the poetry of Robinson Jeffers with the lilting music of Mike Love and Al Jardine. The result is a powerful and convincing tribute to a majestic landscape that has come to symbolize a state of mind. Jeffers' haunting imagery, and the Beach Boys' melodious sound, provide a feeling of liberation possible only at the edge of a culture that has stubbornly resisted encroachment from the inert materialism that marks much of contemporary society.

Beginning in the early 1960s, and continuing to the present, the harmonies, lyrics, and melodies of the Beach Boys have reflected many important aspects of American civilization. By listening to the albums they've made during that period, one can follow more than a decade of tension and upheaval embodied in popular music. The Beach Boys differ from most other writers and musicians of rock music in their focus on the personal problems and feelings of the ordinary man. And while they did take note of the political and social protests so prevalent during the late 1960s, they always returned in the end to the same basic concerns; in this respect, their vision has been remarkably consistent through fifteen years of playing and recording. The Beach Boys have generally represented a white, middle-class point-of-view, a comforting and reasonable representation of the open, generous, life-enhancing spirit of America.

Exuberance has always been their trademark. They obviously liked what they were singing about, whether it was surf, cars, or girls. Their joyous picture of living transformed the Southern California landscape from just another place on the map into a state of mind, a way of existing. They celebrated not just a land- or beach-scape, but a new cultural lifestyle. Before the advent of The Beatles, the Beach Boys epitomized the idea of a separate "youth culture."

They were equally important for their music. They were

among the first rock musicians to produce their own records, and emphasize the importance of studio sound. From the beginning of their career, the Beach Boys exemplified the feelings of those adults who were made uncomfortable by either the appearance or mannerisms of the early performers of rock 'n' roll. At the beginning of the era, in 1955, Bill Haley and The Comets clowning around on stage and screen, the saxophone player doing all sorts of gymnastic feats while honking madly away, the string bassist climbing aboard his instrument while plucking out the rhythm, and so forth. Perhaps Haley's musicians were only imitating the Black rhythm-and-blues performers, but they must have seemed like maniacal showmen to many other whites, trying to arouse the innocent teenage audiences to heaven-knows-what. "Rock Around the Clock" suddenly shot the Comets into international prominence. To tone down the song's growing notoriety (probably the result of its association with the film *The Blackboard Jungle*, where, as the movie begins, the song blasts out from behind the titles; the teenage theater audience at that time often erupted spontaneously into dancing in the aisles), the Comets may have attempted to dramatize the fun aspect of their newly discovered musical style. Their "funning around" could also have been a deliberate strategy aimed at suggesting that their music was itself mostly harmless nonsense. Titles like "See You Later, Alligator," "Crazy, Man, Crazy," and "Skinny Minnie" probably made no sense whatever to white, literate, straight adults, no matter what they might have meant to blues musicians or fans.

Strangely enough, little criticism was aimed at the words of "Rock Around the Clock." Since the term "rock 'n' roll" derived from the blues tradition, where it referred to intercourse, "rocking" around the clock should have raised danger signals among the conservative population of middle class America. Such was not the case. In many songs, however, the lyrics were deliberately softened by the performers to lessen their impact; Bill Haley, for example, made significant changes in his version of Joe Turner's "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." Turner and his song belonged to the tradition of the "Blues Shouter"; it's not surprising, then, that he bids his woman to get herself up out of bed. Haley, a white musician from a country-western background, deletes that potentially troublesome scene by suggesting that she busy herself instead with

breakfast; bed isn't even mentioned. Even the slightest hint of indecency was completely expurgated.

Even Haley wasn't prepared for the enormous response his music received from his teenage audiences. They swarmed his performances, and exploded into frenetic dancing wherever his band appeared. But where Haley backed away from any possible sexual connotations, other performers, especially Elvis Presley, relished it. "Elvis the Pelvis," as he soon came to be known, aimed his pitch squarely at the female adolescent fan. His success was astonishing. But even Presley was forced to tone down his act when he appeared on national television; the producers of the Steve Allen show deliberately stripped him of any possibility of making unauthorized movements on the program. By dressing him in formal clothing for one song, forcing him to remain frozen in one position, and placing him in a comedy skit, they made quite certain that no one anywhere could possibly be offended by the young star. Elvis' image was even more sanitized when he went into films, and after he was drafted into the Army, nothing else remained of the amiable rebel except his natural charm. The young girls still followed him everywhere he went, but he no longer represented a threat to their parents. It took some time before the culture at large learned to accept Elvis, and the emotional response of the fans (and what that represented).

Early rock 'n' roll soon became identified with electrically amplified guitars (an identification that unfortunately persists to this day). And the guitar continued to be favored by most groups working in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Like The Beatles, the Beach Boys began their career with guitars, drums, and other stringed instruments. As they matured, both groups added pianos and other keyboard instruments, and then expanded further into more exotic kinds of playing equipment. Even at the beginning, the Beach Boys strove for a flowing and harmonious sound in their music, and although they developed more complicated textures in their later work, the basic effect was the same. Carl Wilson's lead guitar became surrounded by a sumptuous, smooth combination of soft falsetto voices, harp arpeggios, modulated organ runs and chords, and anything else that was needed to create the beautiful sounds imagined by Brian Wilson.

Other performers stressed more than their music, however, and Jerry Lee Lewis, another popular star of the fifties,

created a rebellious image in quite another way. With his frenetic foot-stomping-on-the-keyboard style, he insulted some people even more than Presley, by trampling on the middle-class reverence for fine furniture (and everything it symbolized). Although the blond rocker delighted audiences with his playing and singing, his basic appeal was more visceral, as can be seen from some of his song titles ("Great Balls of Fire," "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," e.g.). Undeniably a great showman, he was capable of inspiring terrific amounts of frenzy in his crowds. But his marriage to a 14-year-old second cousin led not only to his exclusion from the British rock 'n' roll scene, but it also contributed greatly to his decline in this country.

The most frenetic performer of all, Little Richard, could be ignored by the guardians of good taste as some sort of freak, since he happened to have a black skin. Rock 'n' roll music was basically a white product, so Little Richard had to be the result of the blues tradition, and even respectable Blacks knew the blues was the devil's music. In the mid-1950s, Black culture in general was ignored by the white middle class; Little Richard's hooting and chord-pounding piano style could be regarded as just so much more garbage. In those days, the only Black vocalists who attracted a white audience were adult pop crooners who sounded more like Bing Crosby than any blues singer. What bothered their WASP patrons was the fact that their children didn't seem interested in the same kind of music, and instead were buying the records of more raunchy performers, and dancing to a different sort of beat.

Chuck Berry sang specifically for the younger generation, and through his popularity proved that a huge audience lay there waiting to be tapped. A flood of solo performers and groups who also reflected problems of their teen-age fans, followed in his wake. His influence is clearly evident in two of his hits, "School Day," and "No Money Down," which were directly echoed by the Coasters' "Yakety Yak" and the Silhouettes' "Get a Job." At the end of the decade, however, Berry was in jail, Elvis had been toned down in a series of mediocre, money-making films, and the extraordinarily influential Buddy Holly had been killed in an airplane crash (1959).

Thus, by the first years of the 1960s, rock 'n' roll had become a formula-ridden product, redeemed only occasionally

by the inventiveness of Phil Spector and his series of girl-singing groups. During this period, popular music in America had lost many of the original connections to the traditions that had created the new sound of the previous decade. Instead, a small number of thoroughly professional composers had begun to mine, not the blues or country traditions, but the Broadway and Tin Pan Alley background of the great American songwriters. The few who survived this era belonged to the latter tradition: singers and composers like Carol King, Paul Anka, and Neil Sedaka have never been more popular. Elvis Presley managed to make the transition from social rebel to the establishment. Other, less adaptable performers either retreated into traditional genre (Jerry Lee Lewis went back into country music), or vanished altogether (Little Richard and Chuck Berry appear infrequently today). The extension of the Tin Pan Alley conventions succeeded in blending together a new kind of American popular music, undercutting the rock movement and sapping its vitality, leaving it once again to the experimenters.

Before this trend was firmly established, it was abruptly transformed into a golden age of rock when new stars arose in England and California. The story of how the British groups, led by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, conquered American pop music is well known. California's contribution is not as clear. Only a small part of that history can be related here, but the Beach Boys are utterly central to what happened, and their place in the development of the form will become more evident as we talk about their music.

Before proceeding further, however, some mention should be made of popular dancing in the early sixties. Beginning about 1960, the twist swept the adolescent crowd, and rapidly pushed out all other forms of dancing. Then a strange thing happened: the musical center-of-gravity suddenly shifted, and the adult audience began appropriating their children's style of dancing. And with that, of course, came the music associated with the form. The crooners gradually sold fewer records, and dance-oriented songs took over the market. Then, as now, dance music needed a strong beat to be successful. At the same time, the sound could not be so harsh as to assault the eardrums of its listeners. Many artists tried to find a combination that could provide enough beat, tension, and interest to capitalize on the increasing popularity of rock 'n'

roll music as a dance form. In Detroit, for example, Motown built on Phil Spector's musical ideas, and hit its stride in the mid-1960s. Yet the center of this creative upheaval was Southern California, where local groups were developing a unique style of music that would soon sweep the country, and continue to influence rock music until today. Only there was popular music sufficiently removed from the other traditional influences (Tin Pan Alley, Blues, Country Western) to strike out on its own. And the best of these groups was the Beach Boys.

2. "Surfin' " to *All Summer Long* (1962-1964)

Although the Beach Boys were first regarded as just another Southern California rock 'n' roll group specializing in surfing music, they were able to outgrow that simplistic image through their considerable musical abilities. Indeed, their surfing image originated almost accidentally. In their first album, only two songs relating to the sport appeared: "Surfin' " and "Surfin' Safari." The success of these two hits prompted the group to mold itself into the role that had been created for it by its audience. Since the world seemed to require a healthy, outdoorsy, surfing image, the Beach Boys supplied the product demanded by their fans. It's to their credit that they were able to live up to the expectations of their audience, and then transcend such a narrow identification by growing in their music, and taking their following with them.

In the early 1960s, hundreds of small rock 'n' roll groups sprang up overnight, and quickly gathered local patronages of varying sizes; the challenge each had to face was to expand their musical horizons while simultaneously increasing their audience. Most of these bands failed within a relatively short period of time, either because their talents were insufficient to carry them beyond a certain plateau of development, or because internal dissensions within the group (usually caused by personality clashes or the pressures of success) destroyed the atmosphere necessary for the creation of good music. In the history of American rock, the Beach Boys have had the longest life as an integral group; during the course of sixteen years, they've managed to weather the many changes in fads and fashions, and still have retained their original followers in Southern California, while building a world-wide audience rivalled in numbers only by fans of The Beatles. Unlike the latter, however, the Beach Boys are still performing, as a group and show few signs of the animosities which plagued the Liverpool four.

The Beach Boys are more than just another group of high school surfers singing their way into maturity. Rather, they represent a distinctive kind of life style, a Southern California pastoral. In their world, sand- and sea-scape replace the traditional country ideals; the sounds of the surf and the sea drown out the raucous noise of the city. Although their

creation may look superficially real to the outside observer, it actually represents a make-believe world unexperienced by the vast majority of their teen-age followers. The values of this mythical world are exactly those that describe the Beach Boys' own singing style: cool and colorful, and above all, comfortable. The young adolescent's fancies and fantasies have been transposed into vibrant sound.

To many critics of the time, the Beach Boys looked and sounded hopelessly superficial. It could be argued that such superficiality was all the group was ever capable of; but this surface quality in their music was less of a limitation than might be imagined, and may instead have been the result of a conscious realization that their abilities had certain creative boundaries beyond which it was not wise to go. Learning to operate freely within one's limits is the first sign of professionalism in the arts.

Their early songs deliberately avoided the richer kinds of experience that filled the records of Chuck Berry in the late 1950s, rhythm and blues singers Chester Burnett (Howling Wolf) and McKinley Morganfield (Muddy Waters) in the early 1960s and blues folksinger Bob Dylan. They also refused to compete with the likes of Ray Charles, or the other innovators who were mixing together various styles of popular musical traditions to make the "new sound." Instead, under the leadership of Brian Wilson, they picked their songs carefully, and created a unique style that was perfectly suited to their subject matter, a sound that merged the harmonies and rhythms heard frequently and clearly in white music.

The content of their early music often seemed as superficial as the form in which it was packaged. But this apparent liability often worked in their favor, due largely to the genre in which they worked. The classic pastoral, literally defined, refers specifically to a certain kind of bucolic literature originally composed by Greek poets in the third century B.C. The genre was a popular form in ancient times, and again became widespread during the late Middle Ages. Throughout the Renaissance, pastoral themes appeared widely in the work of the greatest poets and dramatists of the time. Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Milton all wrote pastorals during the course of their careers. As the pastoral developed, it gradually became more complex. By the time it first appeared in American thought and letters, it had grown into a multi-

faceted literature able to express the inherent paradoxes in life while still retaining its basic simplicity.

The primary premise of the genre is that everything can be rendered in terms of country scenes or settings. Pastoral innocence, a concept essential to its philosophy, may be expressed either in psychological or religious terms. In either case, the idea is the same: city life is utterly corrupt and corrupting, while the country existence is necessarily wholesome and morally edifying. Those born innocent must guard themselves at all times against the corrupting influences of the outside world, lest they be overwhelmed by forces beyond their control, and swept into the cesspools of society. The influence of the pastoral remains strong even today, as we can see in various cigarette commercials, popular literature (the modern gothic), and the modern idea of the vacation retreat, which spirits us away from the everyday world to a nostalgic, sentimental, bucolic paradise where worries are swept aside by the cool country breezes. The pastoral celebrates country life over city existence, rest over work, peace instead of cares. Life, it says, is a time of renewal, and each day is a new rebirth. Rather than imitate nature, it reembodies it in a fantasy creation flavored with realistic details.

The Beach Boys reworked the pastoral theme to capitalize on the idea of Southern California as the new pastoral paradise. By making California a place where young people wanted to be, the group rapidly outgrew its local audience, and was soon hitting the national charts. To fans outside the state, the place names celebrated in songs like "Surfin' U.S.A." had the exotic ring of far-off Xanadu. No less exotic was the sport celebrated by the inhabitants of this strange and lovely land. You could ride along in films or on TV, but without an ocean nearby, the best surfing trip available was the crest of your own imagination. California was a gleaming wonderland of eternal sunshine, where the beaches were warm all year round, the girls smiling and friendly and a little bit silly, and the wild waves just waiting for someone to master them.

As might be expected, the pastoral form has its favorite seasons. To the Greek and Latin poets who first developed it, Spring and Summer are the favored times of the gods. To the Beach Boys, "Summer Means Fun," (to borrow the title of Jan and Dean's 1966 recording). School's out, and it's time to let go, all day (and all night) long. The Beach Boys'

preoccupation with the season (it would be unkind to label it an obsession) is a natural reflection of their youth at the time the group was formed. In 1962, when they recorded and released their first album, they were scarcely out of high school. Mike Love, the oldest of the group, had just turned twenty-one. And they looked the part they played: youthful, hedonistic surfers who cared only for surf, sun, cars, and girls, not necessarily in that order (but almost). The visual rhetoric of their early record covers, which feature sea, sand and surfboards, helped reinforce this image, and gave the impression that all of their songs were concerned with the sport. Of course, this was not really true. Brian Wilson, the composer (with Mike Love) of their first single, "Surfin'," had never surfed himself; despite this, he was able to convince the surfing crowd (and hordes of outside followers) that this song, and those that followed, "were written," as one record producer put it, "by someone who was out there hanging ten." The entire surfing culture was mythologized by the Beach Boys.

"Surfin'" was released on the Candix label, with a non-surfing song, "Luau" (not composed by the group), on the B side. This first record was followed by another pair of songs, one of which, "Judy," was also written by Wilson, although neither of the compositions dealt with the surfing culture. When their first single hit was rerecorded by Capitol Records for the group's first album, *Surfin' Safari* (November 1962), none of the other pre-Capitol songs were included. "Surfin'" suggests some of the culture behind the sport: the surfer needs his radio, girl, and even his special dance, the "Surfer Stomp," to complete his day. The beach mystique is already being developed. "Surfin' Safari," the title hit of their first album, carries the process one step further. For the first time, we hear some of the more affectionate phrases in the surfer's language. Girls are honeys, and the vehicles you use to take them (and your boards) to the beach are woodies (paneled station wagons); and, of course, all of you dress in well-worn bluejeans. We are also given a short geography lesson to lead us around the unfamiliar surfing territory; names like Malibu and Doheny must have sounded strange to anyone outside of Southern California, but they would soon be repeated often enough to become familiar labels countrywide within a year or two.

Also included in the album is "Moon Dawg," a surfing

instrumental not composed by the Beach Boys. This particular selection is typical of what surfing music was like before the Beach Boys began to develop their mellow and energetic sound. Like most of its kind, "Moon Dawg" is characterized by a loud, twanging lead guitar, and a rapid, almost raunchy beat; the sound has been altered by an echo chamber. This kind of song rapidly disappeared after the Beach Boys began playing; their wide influence soon became evident as other California groups began imitating their style, and the older music just faded away. The final number in the *Surfin' Safari* album, "The Shift," emphasizes another important element in teen-age music and culture — clothes. The song celebrates the soft eroticism of a surfer-girl who really turns the singer on when she wears that certain kind of dress.

While all of these pieces were more or less popular, the song that really broke the group out of its regional mold was "Surfin' U.S.A.," which appeared in March, 1963, less than a year after their first local release. By using the music of Chuck Berry's 1958 rocker, "Sweet Little Sixteen," and adding the words and organ of Brian Wilson, the mild falsetto harmonies of the Four Freshmen, and an infectious energy all their own, they created in their audience a powerful urge to pick up a board, head for the ocean, and live out a surfing dream. This was their best performance to that time; within weeks after the record was released, they had a national reputation. I've been told by college students from those days that one would often see cars in the midwest with surf boards bolted to the tops of their roofs; it didn't seem to matter that they were a thousand miles from the nearest ocean: the important thing was just to have the board.

The pastoral imperative of the California lifestyle reached new heights in this song. The concept of an entire generation of teenagers leaving the humdrum environment of school to escape into the surf is a gigantic and utterly compelling fantasy. And while the entire mood of the piece is hypothetical (Brian's first word is "if"), their imaginary world is constructed in the most desirable terms.

Just in case you haven't as yet learned what to wear or how to look, Brian supplies the necessary information: long, almost knee-length cut-off denims; rubber-bottomed huarache sandals; blond hair for both sexes, bleached either by the sun or other means. As in the earlier songs, another map is

provided: Del Mar, the Ventura County line, Doheny, San Onofre, Redondo Beach, L.A.

The words at the end of the song clearly pinpoint the group's intended audience: teenagers out on their summer vacation. Also, the scope of the song is unmistakable: literally everyone has gone out surfing. Once again the chorus is sung in softened falsetto harmonies.

Wilson adds an insistent and emphatic choral back-beat to the piece by having falsetto voices repeat a phrase behind the safari's itinerary, which itself is a direct quote from surfing language: a surfer's position relative to an incoming wave is described as being either "inside" or "outside," depending upon which way the curl is breaking. Hence, the more you hear the song, the more familiar you become with the specialized jargon of the sport. The song still makes sense whether you catch the special significance of the phrase or miss it completely; it was this kind of added touch that separated the Beach Boys from their numerous imitators. While perhaps not significant in itself, it does provide a musical and verbal emphasis that enhances the song's exuberance, and reveals Brian's inventiveness. One must remember that the Beatles had not yet conquered America, and most white rock 'n' roll groups made their respective ways into the charts by imitating black music. The Beach Boys were one of the few groups prior to the Beatles that developed a sound sufficiently distinct from their competitors to set them apart in a class by themselves. "Surfin' U.S.A." reveals Brian Wilson's fertility as a composer and arranger.

The next two Beach Boys albums were released in March, 1963; curiously, however, the surfing element figures in neither of them. Instead, the emphasis shifts to car songs. For some unexplained reason, the first of these pieces, "409," which had appeared both on their first single record and their first LP, is repeated in what is often called their third album, *Shut Down*. Only two of the songs on this record are by the Beach Boys, however. The "409" in the title refers to a particular kind of car, and, more specifically, to the horsepower of a Chevy V-8 sedan that had been produced as General Motors' answer to Ford's 406 and the legendary Super-Stock Dodge. It was a huge engine for the size of the car, and it became so popular with a certain adolescent crowd that a separate market for 409 tags sprang up overnight. Now it was

possible to own a less expensive car that could compete in acceleration (more often at traffic-light intersections than in official drag races) with the standard-size Chevrolets. And if your car didn't actually have the engine, you could at least boast that it did by applying the 409 tags to both sides of the fender just above the bumper.

The adolescent competitiveness celebrated in these songs is a reflection of the harsh intrusion of mechanized civilization into the pastoral world of surf and turf. The ugly noise of roaring mufflers drowns out the sound of the waves, the exhaust smoke pollutes the air, and the resulting haze lingers long afterward over the beach. By turning their attention to the car craze, the Beach Boys are merely bringing up-to-date the fascinating struggle between nature and machine that has marked so much of American culture. Of course, car songs were no novelty in rock 'n' roll music by 1963. As early as 1955, Chuck Berry was singing about "Mabellene," the V-8 Ford that out-raced a Cadillac. Berry's song expresses more about cars than anything the Beach Boys would sing. You were never quite sure whether Berry was just describing his car, or mourning the loss of his girl, who had left him for the Cadillac man, or both. To a Black from the inner city, car and girl can become one and the same. But to a white, middle-class surfer, the world is wider and brighter, and includes something more than his wheels and his girl.

In their exploration of the car culture, the Beach Boys strike a basically optimistic note. Although the machine has invaded their pastoral world, their imagery is less aggressive and threatening than complementary. Hence, in their fifth LP, *Little Deuce Coupe* (October, 1963), the song titles are flattering: the car is described as a "Custom Machine," and the girl is a "Car Crazy Cutie" who rides in a "Cherry, Cherry Coupe." The word "cherry" in this context doesn't refer to color, but to something particularly superior or refined. Instead of ruining their pastoral vision, the car now makes it possible. For, just as there is a natural geographical association between surfing and the Southern California region, there also exists an equally natural sociological association between surfing and automobiles in that part of the country. Without any means of public transportation, the car assumes immense importance as the only possible way of getting your board to the ocean. Further, the car makes possible a temporary

escape from the confining clutches of high school, college, home, family, and job, if only for a day. For that short period of time, you could assume a life-style unruffled by any concerns plaguing the real world. Thus, the car became both a symbol of independence and freedom and the very means by which to assert it. By suggesting the harmony that can be established between the machine and the pastoral vision of the beach-paradise, the Beach Boys confirmed the naivete that so markedly delineates their musical vision.

The social possibilities of the car, and the peculiar status associated with a particular model, are clearly heard in one of the group's most popular records, "Fun, Fun, Fun" (issued as a single in February, 1964, and included in the album *Shut Down, Volume 2* a month later). The song begins with another tribute to Chuck Berry, similar to one paid earlier when Brian Wilson borrowed the melody of "Sweet Little Sixteen" for "Surfin' U.S.A." The beginning of the record copies the opening guitar run and rhythm from Berry's hit, "Johnny B. Goode." Following this introduction, we're told about a little girl who uses her set of keys to cruise in her father's T-Bird (Ford Thunderbird) when she should be studying in the library. One wonders whether the mysterious blonde in *American Graffiti* would have ever driven her white Thunderbird in the film if the Beach Boys hadn't written this song.

Another cruising scene highlights "I Get Around" (a single record in May, 1964; included on the *All Summer Long* LP, August, 1964). It appears in retrospect that this particular composition was deliberately released just before school vacations were due to begin, for it celebrates in its exuberant style that time of year when freedom from classes gave one the opportunity to explore new territories, and avoid cruising the old familiar ground or strip (the street where adolescents slowly drove their cars up and down, looking for friends and dates).

Still, the spirit of competition remains basic to the car scene, as is evident in the popularity of "409," which was one of the most frequently recorded songs the group ever played. "409" captures the excitement of the adrenalin "rush" as the chorus urges the driver to rev up the engine, preparatory to beating out the competition: To be beaten in such a race is to be "Shut Down." The Beach Boys' affection for cars and racing shows up again in "Little Deuce Coupe," (included in the

album of the same name), in which they praise a modified 1932 Model-A Ford with as much feeling as one might express for a girl, cataloging in detail her virtues and attributes.

In an album released in September, 1963, just a month earlier than *Little Deuce Coupe*, The Beach Boys introduce an archetypal image, the *Surfer Girl*. On the surface, this sounds very much like their earlier work, but certain refinements in their pastoral creation are evident. The most important change is the new image of the girl herself: She now assumes the classic features associated with the "California girl." Like some species of bird, she is classified, but not described in great detail. We see her as blonde, tanned, lean, leggy, unbelievably healthy: her likeness is everywhere, in magazine ads and television commercials (especially for hair-coloring products), and in all the beach party and bikini films of the time. *Surfer Girl* recapitulates sounds heard in the group's earlier music. The falsetto background voices recur in "Catch a Wave," which features a lovely harp arpeggio not usually found in teenage pop records. The next cut on the album, "In My Room," is one of the first introspective pieces performed by the Beach Boys. It celebrates relief instead of activity, a place where there are no parents to hassle, no chores to be done, in other words, a pastoral retreat. The song expresses the universal human longing for some refuge from the hectic pace of everyday life, and the need of everyone for peaceful solitude. It also suggests a necessary retreat from a culture that seems at times too public, too competitive, too much oriented towards making it big.

Four Beach Boys albums appeared in 1963, and four more were issued in 1964, as the group began moving away from simpler themes to encompass more of the outside world. We hear about "The Girls on the Beach" in the album *All Summer Long* (August, 1964): The pastoral wish fulfillment is particularly strong in this LP. The ideal here is still oriented primarily toward a male adolescent fantasy, although it seems clear that the viewpoint represents a nostalgic look back at high school innocence and naivete. For example, one cut of the album deliberately evokes the mid-1950s by referring specifically to Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Elvis Presley, while the raucous biting saxophone of an earlier rock 'n' roll epoch supplies an instrumental sound uncharacteristic of the Beach Boys. Nostalgia also seems responsible for "Drive In,"

with its perfectly exact references to the old cars in which the windows become easily fogged up; the advice is never to sneak your friends into your car's trunk. A more contemporary note is supplied by "Don't Back Down," another surfing song. As it happens, this piece represents their farewell to the sport, since they were never to record another.

Their final album of 1964, *Beach Boys Concert* (October), was also their first recorded concert appearance. Four of the songs included on this record utilize the language of the automobile scene, and confirm the suggestion that their car-culture image is distinctly complementary to their surfing background. The other selections are mixed, although they do clearly indicate two of the group's sources for inspiration. The first number is "Fun, Fun, Fun," which in turn is neatly balanced by the last piece, Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," the source of the guitar run opening their own song. The Beach Boys also try their own variation of the Four Freshmen's "Graduation Day," and fail to bring it off (the original is doubtlessly more polished). However, it's significant that they allow the comparison to be made by their audience, even if their version almost becomes a parody, due to some callow attempts at humor. The use of this material clearly indicates that the Beach Boys by now are secure enough in their own identity as a group to smile upon their origins, and begin searching around for new musical horizons to conquer.

3. *Beach Boys Today to Beach Boys Party* (1965)

In early 1965, while recording *The Beach Boys Today* (released in March, 1965), Brian Wilson announced to the rest of the group that he would no longer tour with them. The impact on the others was profound. While Brian remained at home and in the studios, continuing to compose, arrange, and produce their records, and generally guide the group, the rest decided to maintain their contacts with the public, and Bruce Johnston was eventually recruited (by Mike Love) to replace Brian while they were on the road. He was a good choice, and in time would write some of the group's most effective material. Still, it was a difficult time both for Brian and the others, and it is to their credit that they never broke up, or even stop touring.

Much of the increasing seriousness of their music can be attributed to Brian's own difficulties, but other factors also played their part. The Beach Boys were never ignorant of contemporary developments in rock music, and since much of their early success derived from their ability to adapt contemporary styles to their own inimitable sound, they began experimenting with the music created by the other strong names in pop, including Phil Spector, The Beatles, and Bob Dylan. Thus, while the group was hardly politically oriented in those days, that still didn't stop them from recognizing Dylan's genius or importance, as can be seen in *Beach Boys Party* (November, 1965), where they sing "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Also included on that album are three versions of Lennon-McCartney songs, "I Should Have Known Better," "Tell Me Why" (both from The Beatles 1964 film, *A Hard Day's Night*), and "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" (from their more recent picture, *Help!*). An earlier album, *Summer Days (and Summer Nights!)* (June, 1965), includes their version of a Phil Spector-Ellie Greenwich-Jeff Barry composition they call "Then He Kissed Me." On the same record, they imitate Franki Valli and The Four Seasons by singing "You're So Good to Me," and also include an instrumental, "Summer Means New Love," which recalls the title of Percy Faith's "Theme from a Summer Place," an extremely popular tune in early 1960. In duplicating the sound and feel of the older piece, Brian Wilson experiments

with a full orchestra, including strings, horns and reeds. And while he echoes the pop sound of the early sixties, he seems to be feeling his way toward the kind of production number that will prove so typical of his later work. At this stage in their development, the group continues to synthesize both the old and the new, but out of this growing complexity in sound will come the revolution of 1966.

While the changing emphases in their 1965 records cannot be called a completely new shift, there is much evidence that their music is becoming more expressive as time goes on. This is not unexpected. Brian Wilson by this time is 24 years old, and Mike Love is 25, and their concerns are changing as their adolescence fades away. As they matured, the Beach Boys began to expand the number of subjects included in their pastoral world. Writers of traditional pastoral gradually began introducing expressions of disappointed love, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the Beach Boys began exploring similar themes in their song, "Wendy" (from the LP, *All Summer Long*, issued in August, 1964). In time, the idea of thwarted love will become a theme central to their work, but at this point its appearance is almost disguised. "Wendy" is a rock 'n' roll dance-along number. The words are not happy, and the painful lyrics are set off by the use of long pauses separating the opening notes. The initial mood is first overtaken, then obliterated, by a strong dancing tempo from the drums, and the emerging, harmonious vocal line. The sadness is conquered by the melody. At first, we hear a question asking what had gone wrong. The rest of the piece leads up to the singer accepting the fact she's simply gone off with someone else: her decision may be hard to live with, but life goes on, and the chorus, which had been reinforcing the pain of her departure with a recurring phrase accepts Wendy's loss in the last line.

We can hear other examples of deeper experiences and feelings in their first 1965 album, *Beach Boys Today* (March). "Good to My Baby" reflects a seriousness little shown even a year before, and "Don't Hurt My Little Sister" reveals concern for someone else's feelings that would have been alien to their earlier work. Perhaps the most eye-opening song from the album is "When I Grow Up," which poses questions about the future.

For the first time, the mood is completely different from

another song from the record, "Dance, Dance, Dance," which represents a return to their earlier concerns: listening to the radio, and then an afternoon of dancing, both of which provide alternatives to the mundane existence of school. But for the Beach Boys, school is permanently out, and songs such as these are heard less and less with each new album. Other choices lie ahead, the choices seen in "When I Grow Up," a song which applies not only to the group itself, but also to its audience, which is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

These autobiographical interrogations had never been heard before in the history of rock music, except possibly in Chuck Berry's old rockers, where he asserts his own understanding of others' predicaments ("Almost Grown" and "School Day," for example). In more contemporary music, the closest approximation was John Lennon's "Help!" which wasn't released until July, 1965. The days of having "Fun, Fun, Fun" are drawing to a close, not just for the Beach Boys, but for American culture as a whole. Rock lyrics, probably due to the considerable influence of Bob Dylan, are beginning to reveal a growing concern with adult problems and situations. Awareness of themselves as something other than party-going, mindless, pleasure-seeking goof-offs is beginning to appear in Beach Boy lyrics.

Correspondingly, their instrumentation is also growing more complex. In "When I Grow Up," a harpsichord, an instrument usually associated with "serious" music, supplies a bite and drive to the song that could have been achieved in no other way; this was before The Beatles began their experimentation with more sophisticated instruments than guitar, drums, and piano. Brian Wilson has obviously begun to reach for a quality in sound to duplicate an increasing awareness within himself that is guiding him away from the naive lushness of sentimental pop music, and into a broader range of musical experience. The Beach Boys will never again be satisfied to rely on superficial nostalgia evoked by a simplistic mesh of strings and harmonies.

In the history of rock music, 1965 is a year of transition. The widespread changes that affected all of the groups who were able to make the switch can clearly be heard in *The Beach Boys Today* album (November). "Help Me, Rhonda," from that LP, is deceptive in many respects. Outwardly a dance song, it also suggests pain: love affairs don't

last forever. The lyrics plea for help, although the song itself is upbeat. The conclusion seems to be that if one can create music out of feeling, that feeling can't be all bad. The writing and playing of the song is itself a way to work through the disappointment; and if the piece is good enough, perhaps the Rhonda addressed in the lyrics will accept an invitation to dance to the composition.

By this time in their career, the Beach Boys have an international following, and their incessant touring has obviously added a new dimension to their music. Songs like "The Girl from New York City," "Salt Lake City," and "California Girls" (all from *Summer Days (and Summer Nights)*, released in June, 1965) take particular note of their travels, and get away from the regionalism so strongly evident in their early work. The pastoral sense hasn't completely faded, however: "Summer Means New Love" and the title song both deal with familiar themes. Also, for the first time we see in this LP a touch of humor never before used. In the song "I'm Bugged at My Old Man," the evil father has cut his son's long hair in his sleep, tacked boards over his windows, sold his surfboard, and ultimately caused his suspension from school. It's hard to believe the piece means anything in particular, but it does foreshadow more of the same, in songs like "Vegetables," "I'd Love Just Once to See You," and "She's Goin' Bald."

The comical facet of their music is also evident in *Beach Boys Party*. The spontaneity of this record, its liveliness and good humor, make it stand out in a vintage year. Although it was put together in the usual studio setting, it gives the appearance of a live performance, an off-the-wall, spur-of-the-moment creation in which the group simply played and sang whatever came into their heads. Under the guise of a loose session, the Beach Boys are free to experiment with styles and sounds never before used by them. They range over a wide variety of materials, old and new, familiar and strange, stretching their capabilities, and obviously striving to increase their musical powers. The intention seems to be: here we are, this is who we are (for now), and even we don't know where we'll be next time around. A turning point has now been reached, and Brian suggests that it's time for their fans to listen and take stock; great things are in the works.

4. *Pet Sounds to Holland (1966-1973)*

Two important factors must be taken into consideration when examining the work of the Beach Boys following 1965. First, the rock music business had become more competitive than ever before, as musicians, composers, and writers scrambled madly for a limited audience. Too many groups existed for the public to support, and the necessary attrition that resulted left many promising young players and singers without an audience, or at least doing something else besides performing. On the other hand, the few groups who made it to the top suddenly found themselves showered with unimaginable riches practically overnight, and pursued by avid fans to the farthest corners of their private lives. The pressure of success (and resulting ego problems) destroyed as many groups as it helped. Still, the mid-1960s seem in retrospect a golden age of popular music. Groups like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Jefferson Airplane, The Doors, The Buffalo Springfield, The Mamas and Papas, Simon and Garfunkel, and individual performers like Bob Dylan and Harry Nilsson, were all writing, recording, and creating incredibly good music during this period. This list ignores the growing interest in American and English Blues, experiments in "country-rock" (by the Byrds, for example, who were mainly influenced by Gram Parsons, one of the founders of The Flying Burrito Brothers), and the developing phenomenon of "super groups" (e.g., The Cream; Crosby, Stills, Nash [and Young]). For sheer excitement and real talent, it was a period unmatched in the history of American and English music.

The record industry had been reshaped in the late fifties and early sixties as the age of the buying public shifted from the adult to adolescent level. Sales volume jumped enormously. The change in musical tastes reflected the efforts of society to transform and reform itself. But where the music succeeded, for a short time anyway, in becoming experimental and even challenging to the buying public, society as a whole backed off from any radical changes, and seemed to settle down into more rigid behavior resulting in widespread disenchantment and disappointment. By the end of the decade, what promise there was had been dissipated.

Another factor in understanding the work of the Beach Boys after the middle part of the 1960s relates once again to the pastoral form, and its antecedents. Outwardly, the pastoral vision seems confined to the external world: implicit in its outlook, however, is the assumption that the cheerful order of things necessarily reflects an inner serenity that is also peaceful, happy, and innocent. Over a period of time, some pastoral poets realized that this mythological picture of harmony and order didn't really approximate the way things were, that the pastoral paradise was an oasis in the middle of a harsh desert, or a garden surrounded by a savage wilderness. Similarly, internal serenity can easily be upset by the many violent passions raging outside; to examine this peace of mind, and regain it whenever it has been lost, the pastoral must turn inward to the self. Introspection can result from curiosity, religious needs, or a search for pleasure. The Beach Boys demonstrated all three responses in their next few albums.

Six months passed between the release of *Beach Boys Party* and their first album of 1966, *Pet Sounds* (May). But the result was well worth the wait, and the album was not only the finest record yet produced by the group, but it was also one of the truly influential releases in the history of rock music. It still ranks as one of their two or three finest performances. *Pet Sounds* was the first "concept album" in rock, anticipating the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* by a full year. Such questions are often irrelevant; what does matter is the merit of an album, whether it makes a place for itself both in terms of audience and with other musicians. On both these counts, this record remains, a decade later, a superb innovation in sound, and an extraordinary accomplishment in American popular music.

The album hangs together more coherently than is usually noted by critics. It seems clear that Brian Wilson, who wrote all the music and produced the record, is extending his own prodigious grasp of studio technique, begun scarcely three years earlier. Layer upon layer of strings, keyboard instruments, horns, reeds, striking percussive sounds, and background harmonies from voices laid on over several tracks, create a sound texture more lush, but at the same time more complex, than anything yet heard in rock music. Against this astonishing background, the deceptively simple lyrics (most written by Tony Asher) are clearly sung, and quite easy to

hear. Hence, a surprising amount of tension is created merely by this juxtaposition of lyric simplicity and musical complexity, and the result is the most intricate and exciting sound prior to The Beatles' albums, *Revolver* and *Sergeant Pepper*.

Pet Sounds is less a headlong leap into unexplored territory than a natural step forward from the group's earlier work. All the sounds we heard before are present here, but in more developed form. The group is exploring at greater depth sentiments that had already been declared. However, everything has been unified in a series of separate, yet connected movements that focus specifically upon the problems of maturation. Thus, where some groups of the time were celebrating new levels of consciousness achieved through the use of various drugs, religions, or philosophical ideas, the Beach Boys continued to focus upon the more immediate problems of personal relationships. The hedonistic surfers who allegedly never grew up have achieved a sensitivity to human feelings and emotions that few of the trendier rock groups bothered to cultivate; and rather than ignore the problems of living, or bypass them for some esoteric philosophical system, or eccentric and self-indulgent solutions, the Beach Boys decided to meet squarely the dilemma of being vulnerable human beings at a time when so much of life was in turmoil around them.

Pet Sounds tells the story of a love affair, from its beginnings in hopeful optimism to the tragedy of separation after things fall apart. There's no real plot to the tale, only a series of separate episodes strung together like motion-picture frames that have been disconnected from the complete narrative. We hear the reactions, the frustrations, the hesitant, tentative gestures of the disappointed lover as he wanders through the ruins of a deteriorating relationship. "Wouldn't It Be Nice," suggests the adolescent, as he naively dreams about love and marriage. This is romantic fantasy at its most optimistic. The lyrics describe a pastoral paradise. But something must be wrong, because all they ever do is talk about it. Perhaps they're too young to marry, like many adolescents, but certainly they're not too young to love, or suffer from unrequited love.

The second song, "You Still Believe in Me," begins to instill complications in the music through various percussive instruments and horns combined with multiple layers of

vocal sound. We hear suggestions in the music that the boy is ineffectual, that his anxiety needs relief. Then, in the next three pieces, the sense of passivity seems to increase, until it borders on depression. The affair is not going well. The thickly textured strings, played against guitar and drums, together with the piercing percussion instruments behind the multi-layered vocal sounds, increase the tensions between what the young man desires, and what he actually feels. He tries to defend himself, explain himself to his love; but he fails. His mood is evident in the title of the fifth song, "I'm Waiting for the Day." That is, he passively is waiting for her to decide. The initiative no longer belongs to him, if it ever did.

The next to last cut on the first side is one of two instrumental tracks on the album. The final song, "Sloop John B.," a traditional folksong arranged by Brian Wilson, seems on the surface to be out of place. Having been released two months earlier as a single, and having had some success in that form, it almost seems to stand alone, apart from the album. Actually, however, Wilson has added exactly those sounds to the number to make it the capstone of the first side. The instrumentation behind the vocal line recapitulates all the sounds heard earlier on side one; thus, the folksong helps unify the initial part of the record. Also, the words of the old song imply a good deal more than they otherwise would because of the special context in which they are placed. For example, the line "this is the worst trip I've ever been on" now suggests a response to the love affair itself, as well as the extended metaphor of the "bad trip," borrowed from the drug culture. The irony of these words was probably unintended in older versions of the song, but seems unmistakable as the Beach Boys sing them. The singer continues his lament: he feels "so broke up," and "want(s) to go home" because things aren't working out for him. The meaning of this ballad depends in large part upon the audience realizing the implications of the old song's significance in context. Brian has reworked a familiar folksong to suggest that the present generation grafts new, more relevant ideas onto the obsolete order of things.

Side two of *Pet Sounds* opens with another of the group's best songs. Once again, multiple layers of percussion instruments, bass guitar, and voices merge to support the emphatic beat behind the words of "God Only Knows." The

Beach Boys have come a long way since "Wouldn't It Be Nice." The new song not only compliments the girl, but also reveals the lover's dependence on her, laying the responsibility for supporting their continuing relationship directly on the female. Another complex cut is "Here Today," the third number on this side. The title suggests that their close relationship is only temporary. The beginning of a new affair is a glorious time, filled with happiness and light; the singer is recollecting these halcyon days as the relationship degenerates around him. As, he laments, in the next song's title, "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times," he throws up his hands in despair: the world has defeated him. The second instrumental track follows, in exactly the same position as the one on the first side.

The final song on the album, "Caroline, No.," sums up all the unfulfilled expectations left hanging at the end of the affair. It seems to represent one final attempt to retrieve the happy, romantic, pastoral time of youth. The innocence of love is lost forever, and all we can do is wonder where that sunny place went to, and lament its passing. The change in feeling is signaled by the girl (who always controlled the relationship); as she grows into a woman, and her appearance alters accordingly, the union comes to an end. But the song isn't over. Brian adds an example of what would be called "concrete music" if this were a classical piece. The noise of a railroad train, and the sound of barking dogs brings the album to an appropriate close. Not only do we hear Wilson's *Pet Sounds*, his favorite musical sonorities, but also the yapping of live pets.

The early pastoral notions of the Beach Boys have now been drowned out by reality. The innocent, uncomplicated life of the surfer has been overtaken by the technology of modern civilization. You can't go on surfing forever. Henceforth, the group will strike out in new directions, as their pastoral visions turn inward, and are replanted in more fertile pastures. The complications of the late 1960s remain unraveled, and the Beach Boys, not surprisingly, reflect the social currents prevalent in that complicated and contradictory era. Their middle-class outlook remains, however. Earlier in the decade, their pastoral music popularized the California dream, associating with it the images of beach, sea, surf, sand, girls, cars, and all the rest. California was the

promised land of America's westward trek. Now, however, other factors were surfacing which threatened to warp that dream into a caricature of itself. Occultism, ecology, fads, drugs, hallucinogens, and cults of all kinds swept middle-class youth, creating the hippie and peace movements, and engineering the mass alienation of an entire generation. The surfer of the early sixties became the flower child of the late sixties. These new concerns of the adolescent world surface in the group's next record, "Good Vibrations" (a single released in October, 1966).

Just as *Pet Sounds* remains their best album to date, so is "Good Vibrations" their best single work; indeed, it has been regarded as their masterpiece by many critics. Although the record contains little that hasn't been heard before, Brian Wilson's love affair with sound finally reaches its peak on this single, which was six months in production. His reach finally catches up to his grasp, for his mastery of technique and sound texture will never be surpassed. One must realize that "Good Vibrations" appeared at a time when the psychedelic movement was about to move its center from Hollywood to San Francisco. The new pastoral landscape suddenly being uncovered by the young generation provided a quiet, peaceful, harmonious trip into inner space. The hassles and frustrations of the external world were cast aside, and new visions put in their place. "Good Vibrations" succeeds in suggesting the healthy emanations that should result from psychic tranquility and inner peace. The word "vibrations" had been employed by students of Eastern philosophy and acid-heads for a variety of purposes, but Wilson uses it here to suggest a kind of extra-sensory experience. A sensitive, someone who's been "turned on" to life, can pick up vibrations emanating from persons, places, or objects. These waves are perceived as rainbow-colored auras, even when they're invisible to the external eye. Good vibrations elevate, elating the receptor, and filling him with joy. A person with good vibrations is fun to have near. A place with good vibrations is a good place to be. And the lyrics of this song exactly convey these feelings. Behind the words, the studio-controlled sounds of the music enhance the visionary feeling of the number. A theremin wails above, behind, and within the melodic line, giving the ever-present harmonies an almost cosmic dimension. The Beach Boys have subsumed the occult into their music, producing a new

hybrid: occult-rock.

The Beach Boys waited over a year before releasing their next album. One single, "Heroes and Villains," did appear in the interim, but it seems to have been overlooked in the aftermath of The Beatles' new LP, *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. In response to that album, and to others The Beatles had released earlier, rock music in both England and America was evolving away from the type of sound the Beach Boys popularized. Rock had become a vehicle for political change, or a reflection of an acid trip. Groups like the Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, and dozens of others created a new California sound, and moved the center of creativity from the Los Angeles area to the Bay Region further north. In this change from south to north, the Beach Boys were suddenly left out in the cold. The next work planned by Brian Wilson and his new collaborator, Van Dyke Parks, was never finished; *Smile* remains one of the great ghost albums in American popular music. Stories still abound concerning its near-legendary contents. Some of the pieces planned for that album do survive in altered form, however, on their next record.

Smiley Smile (September, 1967) is a strange album, and it was received by the public with much muttering, and even greater silence. Curiously, nearly everyone praised the first cut, "Heroes and Villains," even though it had been largely ignored as a single release (July, 1967). It's a difficult song to understand. Beginning with an ambiguous, quasi-autobiographical opening, it then becomes a kind of love song in a cowboy mode, only to shift abruptly ahead in time with talk of children. Behind the words ranges a kaleidoscope of lightly-textured sounds, vocal as well as instrumental, interrupted by harsh, intrusive noises. The total effect is in some respects even more beautiful than "Good Vibrations," although the piece doesn't hold together as well. Wilson shows a wider range of sound and rhythm than ever before.

The major element in the next track, "Vegetables" is humor: Wilson uses jug sounds, pouring water, and good-natured munching to mock vegetarianism and food fads (Brian at one time was deeply hooked on natural foods). "Fall Breaks and Back to Winter" is an experimental instrumental track that suggests an attempt to alter our perceptions of time, in and out of music. "Wind Chimes" (from side two) is another

strange piece, evoking what might be a drug-induced state of somnolence. "She's Goin' Bald" reflects a certain nightmarish humor associated with bad drug trips or "bummers." *Smiley Smile* epitomizes what had happened to rock music by 1967. The days of rock 'n' roll, primarily designed as dance music, had vanished. Writers and musicians are now demanding their audience's attention, as they turn their skills to increasingly serious themes. And somewhere along that tortured way, the Beach Boys lost much of their audience to groups like The Beatles, or to individuals like Bob Dylan.

In an effort to regain some of their lost following, the Beach Boys released their next album, *Wild Honey* (December, 1967) within a surprisingly short period of time. The title song resembles the number "Gettin' Hungry" on their previous record: both are gutsy rhythm-and-blues pieces written by Brian Wilson and Mike Love. The rest of the album lacks any real unity: the first three numbers definitely belong together, representing the group's belated recognition of Motown. The Beach Boys' version of the sound, an adaptation of an older and simpler rhythm and blues to the multiple layered studio technique that they pioneered, results in an anomalous effort. Only one song in the album truly reflects their direction at this time, the lovely "Country Air." This song recognizes the growing importance of the counter-culture movement that was turning a large number of young people against the ideal of the sophisticated urban life. In pastoral phrases quite unlike any they've used before, they sing about breathing the pure country air, and they go on to praise the basic simplicity of life away from the city. The "easy-listening" strings and gentle texture of the song create an exceptionally simple, but lovely atmosphere.

Their next album, *Friends* (June, 1968), is undistinguished musically, but remains historically important since it marks the appearance of Al Jardine as author or co-author of five songs. Dennis Wilson also appears as writer for the first time, and is credited with four numbers. For the first time, all five of the original Beach Boys collaborate on a song, "Be Here in the Mornin'." As the title of the record proclaims, they are indeed all friends. Brian seems to have simplified his intentions in this album. His "Busy Doin' Nothin'" is a gem; unpretentious, conversational, wholly without stress. Two of his brother's Dennis' efforts, "Little Bird" and "Be Still," are

written in a similar mood, but are more intense. The one major disappointment in *Friends* is the song that reveals in retrospect a vital moment in the group's career. "Transcendental Meditation" resulted from their infatuation with the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; unfortunately, the saxophone used in the piece (meant, perhaps, to suggest the drone of the Indian tambura) sounds almost like an old swing sax left over from the 1940s.

The Beach Boys' next album, *20/20* (March, 1969), opens with "Do It Again," a number that's almost an old-fashioned rocker. Curiously, the Beach Boys have now played together so long that some of their earlier songs are undergoing a revival. By this time, the rock 'n' roll revival has been underway for some time, and, ever-faithful in their reflections of the times, the group immediately picks up the latest popular trend. As with their previous record, Brian Wilson has become somewhat less involved in writing and producing: Bruce Johnston contributes some of the writing and productions, particularly in "The Nearest Faraway Place," as does Dennis Wilson. In fact, this particular record is notorious for the song "Never Learn Not to Love," written by Dennis in collaboration with the infamous cult leader, Charles Manson. Manson, of course, was later convicted (with some of his "family") for the Tate-LaBianca murders in August, 1969. Dennis was only peripherally involved with the Manson clan, and none of the other members of the Beach Boys were in any way connected with this seamy business.

20/20 also includes a spirited version of "Cotton Fields," "I Went to Sleep," a lovely melody by Brian Wilson along the lines of "Busy Doin' Nothin'," and several lesser pieces. The album is characterized by its wide variety of material, and also by the fact that production of the songs was split up among the various members of group: Brian did four, Carl another four, and Dennis handled three others. However, Brian continues to be the most inventive of the lot, arranging an a cappella choir for his short number, "Our Prayer." Another collaboration with Van Dyke Parks, "Cabinessence," closes the album, and again suggests that their unfinished and unreleased album, *Smile*, was an unfortunate loss to popular music. The song is the most interesting and puzzling piece on the record.

Sunflower (Fall, 1970) was their first album produced

and distributed by Warner Brothers (the earlier *Smiley Smile* had appeared under the Brother label, but Capital had distributed it). Diversity in both songs and styles continues to characterize their work, and the quality of the album remains consistent. The Beach Boys cared too much for a perfect, polished sound ever to allow lapses in production. Indeed, some critics have criticized them for this inherent smoothness, feeling that harsher, realer, more spontaneous music is preferable. The Beach Boys' love for sound of all kinds is evident in the number, "Add Some Music to Your Day," where they catalog the various kinds of music, and celebrate them all. The spirit of gentle tolerance and acceptance is achieved in both words and melody, as the persistent harmonies and easy-to-follow beat of the harpsichord lead us through the lyrics.

Bruce Johnston contributes "Deirdre," a gentle love song that differs completely from the acid rock and "heavy metal" styles popular at the time. The Beach Boys never ignored popular trends, but at the same time they were never afraid to follow their own creative course, picking and choosing what they wanted from the differing styles proliferating around them. At this point in their career, they were particularly interested in transcendental meditation, the education of the spirit, mind, and heart, and interpersonal relationships. "Our Sweet Love" sums up this evocation of incense, flowers, and warmth in a pop-vocal background underscored by cellos. It's almost a recapitulation of their early "romantic" sound, but the "love" in this song is not the sexual kind frustrated in *Pet Sounds*, but a more mature relationship that nurtures the spirit. The record concludes with a response to the ecology movement, "Cool, Cool Water," which is similar to their earlier song, "Country Air" (Brian Wilson and Mike Love wrote both pieces). The idea is the same in both: nature and the things in it are good, and man destroys nature. The pastoral has been renovated in the cause of preserving the earth; learning to appreciate the natural countryside leads to the reestablishment of harmony within the world and ourselves.

Surf's Up (1971) is one of the Beach Boys' finest achievements. The title is deceptive. The album is definitely not a call to surfers, or even a nostalgic return to an earlier, more simplistic style. Rather, the record encompasses several topical subjects as it looks back over the entire decade of the

1960s. The first song, "Don't Go Near the Water," is a backward glance at the last song in their previous album. The pastoral world is being destroyed by man himself, as he pollutes the environment. "Long Promised Road" suggests the struggle ahead: the old solution, California as the promised pastoral paradise, will no longer do. The trek westward, celebrated in American myth and song, has reached the edge of the continent, and there's no other place to go. Since we cannot go forward, we must remake what we now have. The serious mood of this piece is relieved by the next cut, "Take a Load Off Your Feet," a humorous treatment of the popular health-cults in Southern California. One of the jewels of the album follows: Bruce Johnston's "Disney Girls (1957)" is the California fantasy fulfilled, an evocation in words, sound, and mood of a simpler existence, one epitomized in the smile of a girl transformed into a faithful wife. Few of the Beach Boys' songs celebrate the traditional happy ending; this one suggests that present happiness and a fruitful future can be expressed through a series of sentimental and nostalgic references to the past.

Side two quickly breaks the mood. "Student Demonstration Time" is the group's response to the many political activists of the time who were urging violence to achieve their ends. Their advice is: "Cool it!" In a clever sort of way, the Beach Boys are pointing to their own limitations: the group has always been cool, often lacking the passion and commitment so prized by the critics in other rock stars. "Feel Flows" is a beautiful song; Carl Wilson's music blends harmoniously with Jack Rieley's lyrics to create a flowing sound that highlights the song's themes. A lovely flute slowly weaves its way through the music amidst a panoply of alliterated vocal glides of "w" sounds (an astonishing number of "w" words are used: 8 in the first 7 lines). The sense of the lyrics is obscure, but the poetic devices harmonize with the currents of melody and background orchestration to form a unity of flowing feeling. Ultimately, the song suggests that the transcendent or meditative state reveals the reality within us, a reality where everything feels, everything flows in calm peacefulness. One achieves such perception by cutting through the past evoked by memories or present frustrations until one perceives the inner self.

"Looking at Tomorrow (A Welfare Song)" transports us

into a world where we can all seek relief. Although out of work, the speaker does not protest, nor does he call for revolution; rather, he remains basically optimistic. The thought and style of the song recalls many old folksongs through the use of an acoustic guitar. The kind of revolution approved by the Beach Boys is celebrated in "A Day in the Life of a Tree." One must pierce beneath the surface of things to discover its essence. In this case, our empathy with growing, living plants makes us rebel against the air pollution killing off the trees. Trees are important parts of our world. "Till I Die" is another one of Brian Wilson's remarkable metaphors, realized in words and song. The soul recognizes its oneness with all other existence.

But the best is saved for last. In another spectacular collaboration with Van Dyke Parks, Wilson creates a song of marvelous complexity in "Surf's Up." Once again, Brian's gorgeous sonorities support a string of images to create a unity of sound. As the music proceeds, its mood changes: a tired decadence overcomes the remembrances in the first part of the song. Self-pity seems to defeat the broken man, but he's revived. Then his direction abruptly changes: he turns around to join the young in spirit. Regeneration of spirit does not come about by forgetting the past; on the contrary, only by immersing oneself in the past can a person develop a new awareness of his inner life. The experiences of youth support the maturity of manhood. *Surf's Up* is a fully developed concept album of the seventies, one of the few advances in sound beyond The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* and *Abbey Road*. It stretches one's imagination in sound to encompass ecological and transcendental subjects, and as such, remains the most ambitious album the Beach Boys have completed.

In terms of their development, the *Holland* LP brings the group full circle. They leave California, the edge of the new world, for Amsterdam, an old-world city facing a different ocean. In this new setting, we hear the Beach Boys return again to the sea in "Sail on, Sailor," and "Steamboat." But the longest piece on the album reveals a more particular concern. From a European setting, they look back to their own land, California, which also borders an ocean; their temporary exile gives them a certain perspective on their own country.

The state of mind symbolized in this album approaches

that of *Surf's Up*. Peaceful images override the struggle to declare an open desire for tranquility, and a continuity in cosmic harmony rides above and behind the "California Saga." The ocean is a huge encompassing symbol wherein the eternal struggle can complete itself. The group now recognizes America in a new way: their home turf becomes a place to make, perhaps, a new beginning, a spot from which to embark upon an upward turn in the cycle of life.

At the beginning of their career, the Beach Boys were still children, and they acted like children. Now they've become men, and their concerns are those of the adult world. *Holland* represents no new departure for the group, rather, it gathers together their creative forces, not so much to explore new territory, but to pull their past experiences into a unified whole. But they can't stand still: at the edge they look back and reassess their music, their country, and themselves.

The *Holland* album remains their most recent original work at this writing (Spring, 1976). They've not been inactive, however. A new series of concerts have brought them thousands of new fans while drawing their old friends back once again to live performances. But one wonders how long they can ride the nostalgia wave. Undoubtedly, many listeners in the seventies are discovering forgotten, or even previously unnoticed, value in their 1960s songs. Still, today's fans certainly include many who would like to hear something more than double albums of repackaged material containing nothing more recent than 1969 numbers. It is true, of course, that there seems to be no commercial reason for the group to get back into the studio. They are probably selling more albums now than at any point in the last five years. But concert successes are not enough, and the interest suggested by sales of their older material indicates that their public is waiting for the Beach Boys to sing out with new songs in the second half of the seventies.

DISCOGRAPHY

It is unlikely that a complete discography of The Beach Boys will ever be published. Their work has been re-recorded and repackaged frequently, numerous albums having been released overseas but not in this country; some of their songs have appeared on promotion records in limited editions, and the discography supplied by their management corporation lists an album not seen anywhere else; all these factors contribute to the difficulty of compiling an album discography that is either accurate or complete. There are further problems in listing their singles releases: the discography printed by Lillian Roxon in her *Rock Encyclopedia* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1969) differs considerably from the one distributed by their management corporation. The following therefore is incomplete, but can serve as a guide to the albums released in America.

Surfin' Safari (1962)

Capitol T 1808

SIDE ONE	SIDE TWO
"Surfin' Safari" (B. Wilson - M. Love)	"Surfin' " (B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Country Fair" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)	"Heads You Win - Tails I Lose" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)
"Ten Little Indians" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)	"Summertime Blues" (E. Cochran - J. Capehart)
"Chug-A-Lug" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)	"Cuckoo Clock" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)
"Little Girl (You're My Miss America) (Catalano-Alpert)	"Moon Dawg" (Derry Weaver)
"409" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)	"The Shift" (B. Wilson - M. Love)

Surfin' U.S.A. (1963)

Capitol T 1890

SIDE ONE	SIDE TWO
"Surfin' U.S.A." (B. Wilson - C. Berry)	"Noble Surfer" (B. Wilson)
"Farmer's Daughter" (B. Wilson)	"Honky Tonk" (Bill Doggett)
"Miserlou" (Roubanis-Wise-Leeds-Russel)	"Lana" (B. Wilson)
"Stoked" (B. Wilson)	"Surf Jam" (C. Wilson)
"Lonely Sea" (G. Usher - B. Wilson)	"Let's Go Trippin' " (Dick Dale)
"Shut Down" (B. Wilson - R. Christian)	"Finders Keepers" (B. Wilson)

Shut Down (1963)

Capitol T 1918

SIDE ONE	SIDE TWO
"Shut Down" (B. Wilson - R. Christian)	"409" (B. Wilson - G. Usher)
"Chicken" (Leiber-Stoller-Rollins)	"Street Machine" (G. Usher - R. Christian)
"Wide Track" (G. Usher - R. Christian)	"The Ballad of Thunder Road" (D. Raye - R. Mitchum)
"Brontosaurus Stomp" (L. Mayorga - E. Cobb)	"Hot Rod Race" (G. Wilson)
"Four On the Floor" (G. Usher - R. Christian)	"Car Trouble" (E. McDuff - O. Couch)
"Black Denim Jacket and Motorcycle Boots" (J. Leiber - M. Stoller)	"Cheater Slicks" (G. Usher - R. Christian)

This album contains only two songs performed by the Beach Boys, "Shut Down" and "409" both of which had been released earlier. To take advantage of their popularity, Capitol apparently rushed this anthology of car songs out, calling it a Beach Boys album.

Surfer Girl (1963)

Capitol T 1981

SIDE ONE

- "Surfer Girl"
(B. Wilson)
"Catch A Wave"
(B. Wilson)
"The Surfer Moon"
(B. Wilson)
"South Bay Surfer"
(B. Wilson - D. Wilson -
A. Jardine)
"The Rocking Surfer"
(trad. arr. B. Wilson)
"Little Deuce Coupe"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)

SIDE TWO

- "In My Room"
(B. Wilson - G. Usher)
"Hawaii"
(B. Wilson)
"Surfer's Rule"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Our Car Club"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Your Summer Dream"
(B. Wilson - B. Norberg)
"Boogie Woodie"
(trad. arr. B. Wilson)

Little Deuce Coupe (1963)

Capitol T 1998

SIDE ONE

- "Little Deuce Coupe"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Ballad of Ole' Betsy"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Be True To Your School"
(B. Wilson)
"Car Crazy Cutie"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Cherry, Cherry Coupe"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"409"
(B. Wilson - G. Usher)

SIDE TWO

- "Shut Down"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Spirit of America"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Our Car Club"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"No-Go Showboat"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"A Young Man Is Gone"
(Melody from "Their
Hearts Were Full of
Spring") (B. Troup)
"Custom Machine"
(B. Wilson)

Shut Down, Volume 2 (1964)
(re-issued as *Fun, Fun, Fun*)Capitol T 2027
Capitol SF 702

SIDE ONE

- "Fun, Fun, Fun"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Don't Worry Baby"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"The Warmth Of the Sun"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"This Car Of Mine"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Why Do Fools Fall In Love"
(F. Lyman - G. Goldner)

SIDE TWO

- "Pom, Pom Play Girl"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Keep An Eye On Summer"
(B. Wilson-Norman-Love)
"Shut Down, Part II"
(C. Wilson)
"Louie, Louie"
(Richard Berry)
"Denny's Drums"
(D. Wilson)

All Summer Long (1964)

Capitol T 2110

SIDE ONE

- "I Get Around"
(B. Wilson)
"All Summer Long"
(B. Wilson)
"Hushabye"
(D. Pomus - M. Schuman)
"Little Honda"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"We'll Run Away"
(B. Wilson - G. Usher)

SIDE TWO

- "Wendy"
(B. Wilson)
"Do You Remember"
(B. Wilson)
"Girls On the Beach"
(B. Wilson)
"Drive-In"
(B. Wilson)
"Don't Back Down"
(B. Wilson)

The Beach Boys Christmas Album (1964) Capitol T 2164

SIDE ONE

- "Little Saint Nick"
(B. Wilson)
"The Man With All the Toys"
(B. Wilson)
"Santa's Beard"
(B. Wilson)
"Merry Christmas Baby"
(B. Wilson)
"Christmas Day"
(B. Wilson)
"Frosty the Snowman"
(S. Nelson - J. Rollins)

SIDE TWO

- "We Three Kings . . ."
(John Henry Hopkins)
"Blue Christmas"
(B. Hayes - J.W. Johnson)
"Santa Claus Is Comin' To
Town"
(J.F. Coots-H. Gillespie)
"White Christmas"
(I. Berlin)
"I'll Be Home for Christmas"
(Gannon-Kent-Ram)
"Auld Lang Syne"

The Beach Boys Concert (1964) Capitol TAO 2918

SIDE ONE

- "Fun, Fun, Fun"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"The Little Old Lady From
Pasadena"
(D. Allfield - R. Christian)
"Little Deuce Coupe"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"Long Tall Texan"
(H. Strzlecki)
"In My Room"
(B. Wilson - G. Usher)
"The Monster Mash"
(L. Capizzi - B. Pickett)

SIDE TWO

- "Let's Go Trippin'"
(Dick Dale)
"Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow"
(Frazier-White-Harris-
Wilson, Jr.)
"The Wanderer"
(E. Maresca)
"Hawaii"
(B. Wilson)
"Graduation Day"
(J. Sherman - N. Sherman)
"I Get Around"
(B. Wilson)
"Johnny B. Goode"
(C. Berry)

The Beach Boys Today (1965) Capitol T 2269

SIDE ONE

- "Do You Wanna Dance"
(B. Sherman)
"Good To My Baby"
(B. Wilson)
"Don't Hurt My Little Sister"
(B. Wilson)
"When I Grow Up"
(B. Wilson)
"Help Me, Rhonda"
(B. Wilson)
"Dance, Dance, Dance"
(B. Wilson)

SIDE TWO

- "Please Let Me Wonder"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"I'm So Young"
(W. H. Tyrus, Jr.)
"Kiss Me Baby"
(B. Wilson)
"She Knows Me Too Well"
(B. Wilson)
"In the Back Of My Mind"
(B. Wilson)
"Bull Session with Big Daddy"
(B. Wilson - C. Wilson -
D. Wilson - M. Love -
A. Jardine)

Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!) (1965)
Capitol T 2354

SIDE ONE

- "The Girl From New
York City"
(B. Wilson)
"Amusement Parks U.S.A."
(B. Wilson)
"Then I Kissed Her"
(P. Spector - E. Greenwich -
J. Barry)
"Salt Lake City"
(B. Wilson)
"Girl Don't Tell Me"
(B. Wilson)
"Help Me, Rhonda"
(B. Wilson)

SIDE TWO

- "California Girls"
(B. Wilson)
"Let Him Run Wild"
(B. Wilson)
"You're So Good to Me"
(B. Wilson)
"Summer Means New Love"
(B. Wilson)
"I'm Bugged At My Old Man"
(B. Wilson)
"And Your Dream Comes
True"
(M. Love - B. Wilson)

Beach Boys Party! (1965) Capitol MAS 2398

SIDE ONE

- "Hully Gully"
(F. Smith - C. Goldsmith)
"I Should Have Known
Better"
(Lennon-McCartney)
"Tell Me Why"
(Lennon McCartney)
"Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow"
(Frazier-White-Harris-
Wilson, Jr.)
"Mountain of Love"
(H. Dorman)
"You've Got to Hide Your
Love Away"
(Lennon-McCartney)
"Devoted to You"
(B. Bryant)

SIDE TWO

- "Alley Oop"
(D. Frazier)
"There's No Other Like My
Baby"
(P. Spector - L. Bates)
Medley: "I Get Around"
(B. Wilson)
"Little Deuce Coupe"
(B. Wilson - R. Christian)
"The Times They Are A-
Changin'"
(B. Dylan)
"Barbara Ann"
(F. Fassett)

Pet Sounds (1966)

Capitol T 2458

SIDE ONE

"Wouldn't It Be Nice"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"You Still Believe In Me"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"That's Not Me"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"Don't Talk (Put Your Head
On My Shoulder)"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"I'm Waiting For the Day"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Let's Go Away for Awhile"
(B. Wilson)
"Sloop John B."
(Arr. B. Wilson)

SIDE TWO

"God Only Knows"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"I Know There's An Answer"
(B. Wilson - T. Sachen)
"Here Today"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"I Just Wasn't Made For
These Times"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)
"Pet Sounds"
(B. Wilson)
"Caroline, No"
(B. Wilson - T. Asher)

Best of the Beach Boys [Volume 1] (1966)

Capitol T 2545

SIDE ONE

"Surfin' U.S.A."
"Catch A Wave"
"Surfer Girl"
"Little Deuce Coupe"
"In My Room"
"Little Honda"

Composers of the songs on this and the other "Best of the..." anthologies are indicated under the albums on which the songs first appeared.

Best of the Beach Boys [Volume 2] (1967)

Capitol T 2706

SIDE ONE

"Barbara Ann"
"When I Grow Up"
"Long, Tall Texan"
"Please Let Me Wonder"
"409"
"Let Him Run Wild"

SIDE TWO

"Don't Worry Baby"
"Surfin' Safari"
"Little Saint Nick"
"California Girls"
"Help Me, Rhonda"
"I Get Around"

Smiley Smile (1967)

Brother T 9001

SIDE ONE

"Heroes and Villains"
(B. Wilson - Van Dyke Parks)
"Vegetables"
(B. Wilson - Van Dyke Parks)
"Fall Breaks and Back
to Winter"
(W. Woodpecker Symphony)
"She's Goin' Bald"
(B. Wilson - M. Love - Parks)
"Little Pad"
(B. Wilson)

SIDE TWO

"Good Vibrations"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"With Me Tonight"
(B. Wilson)
"Wind Chimes"
(B. Wilson)
"Gettin' Hungry"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Wonderful"
(B. Wilson)
"Whistle In"
(B. Wilson)

The Beach Boys Deluxe Set (1967)

Capitol DTCL 2813

A three-album boxed set comprising *Pet Sounds*, *Summer Days*, and *The Beach Boys Today*. The entire set is issued in duophonic stereo.

Wild Honey (1967)

Capitol T 2859

SIDE ONE

"Wild Honey"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Aren't You Glad"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"I Was Made to Love Her"
(Cosby - Hardaway - Moy-
Wonder)
"Country Air"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"A Thing or Two"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)

SIDE TWO

"Darlin'"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"I'd Love Just Once to See
You"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Here Comes the Night"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Let the Wind Blow"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"How She Boogalooed It"
(M. Love - B. Johnston -
A. Jardine - C. Wilson)
"Mama Says"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)

Friends (1968)

Capitol ST 2895

SIDE ONE

- "Meant For You"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Friends"
(B. Wilson - D. Wilson -
C. Wilson - A. Jardine)
"Wake the World"
(B. Wilson - A. Jardine)
"Be Here In the Mornin' "
(B. Wilson - D. Wilson -
C. Wilson - M. Love -
A. Jardine)
"When a Man Needs a
Woman"
(B. Wilson - D. Wilson -
A. Jardine - S. Korthof -
J. Parks)
"Passing By"
(B. Wilson)

SIDE TWO

- "Anna Lee, the Healer"
(M. Love - B. Wilson)
"Little Bird"
(D. Wilson - S. Kalinich)
"Be Still"
(D. Wilson - S. Kalinich)
"Busy Doin' Nothin' "
(B. Wilson)
"Diamond Head"
(A. Vescozo - L. Ritz -
J. Ackley - B. Wilson)
"Transcendental
Meditation"
(B. Wilson - M. Love -
A. Jardine)

The Best of The Beach Boys Volume 3 (1969)

Capitol SKAO 2945

SIDE ONE

- "God Only Knows"
"Dance, Dance, Dance"
"409"
"The Little Girl I Once Knew"
"Frosty the Snowman"
"Girl Don't Tell Me"

The Beach Boys 20/20 (1969)

Capitol SKAO 133

SIDE ONE

- "Do It Again"
(Jeff Barry)
"Bluebirds Over the
Mountain"
(Ersel Hickey)
"Be With Me"
(D. Wilson)
"All I Want to Do"
(D. Wilson)
"The Nearest Faraway Place"
(Bruce Johnston)

SIDE TWO

- "Surfin' "
"Heroes and Villains"
"She Knows Me Too Well"
"Darlin' "
"Good Vibrations"
"Cotton Fields"
(Huddle-Ledbetter)
"I Want to Sleep"
(B. Wilson - C. Wilson)
"Time to Get Alone"
(B. Wilson)
"Never Learn Not to Love"
(D. Wilson)
"Our Prayer"
(B. Wilson)
"Cabinessence"
(B. Wilson - Van Dyke Parks)

Sunflower (1970)

Brother RS 6382

SIDE ONE

- "Slip On Through"
(D. Wilson)
"This Whole World"
(B. Wilson)
"Add Some Music to Your
Day"
(B. Wilson - J. Knott -
M. Love)
"Got to Know the Woman"
(D. Wilson)
"Deirdre"
(B. Johnston - B. Wilson)
"It's About Time"
(D. Wilson - B. Burchman -
A. Jardine)

SIDE TWO

- "Tears In the Morning"
(Bruce Johnston)
"All I Wanna Do"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)
"Forever"
(D. Wilson - G. Jacobson)
"Our Sweet Love"
(B. Wilson - C. Wilson -
A. Jardine)
"At My Window"
(A. Jardine - B. Wilson)
"Cool, Cool Water"
(B. Wilson - M. Love)

Surf's Up (1971)

Brother RS 6453

SIDE ONE

- "Don't Go Near the Water"
(A. Jardine - M. Love)
"Long Promised Road"
(C. Wilson - J. Rieley)
"Take a Load Off Your Feet"
(A. Jardine - G. Winfrey)
"Disney Girls (1957)"
(Bruce Johnston)
"Student Demonstration
Time"
(Based on "Riot In Cell
Block No. 9" by Jerry
Leiber and Mike Stoller
- new lyrics by Mike Love)

SIDE TWO

- "Feel Flows"
(C. Wilson - J. Rieley)
"Lookin' At Tomorrow (A
Welfare Song)
(A. Jardine - G. Winfrey)
"A Day In the Life Of a Tree"
(B. Wilson - J. Rieley)
"Till I Die"
(B. Wilson)
"Surf's Up"
(B. Wilson - Van Dyke Parks)

Carl and the Passions — So Tough (1972)
Brother 2MS 2083

SIDE ONE

"You Need a Mess Of Help
to Stand Alone"
(B. Wilson — J. Rieley)
"Here She Comes"
(R. Fataar — B. Chapin)
"He Come Down"
(A. Jardine — B. Wilson —
M. Love)
"Marcella"
(B. Wilson — J. Rieley)

This album was released with *Pet Sounds*, but this time,
according to the album, *Pet Sounds* is heard in monophonic —
the way it was originally produced.

Holland (1973)

SIDE ONE

"Sail On Sailor"
(composers: B. Wilson —
Tandyn Almar — Van Dyke
Parks; lyricists: J. Rieley —
R. Kennedy)
"Steamboat"
(D. Wilson — J. Rieley)
"California Saga"
Part One: "Big Sur"
(Mike Love)
Part Two: "The Beaks Of
Eagles"
(Robinson Jeffers, from
"Jeffers Country" —
composers and additional
lyrics Alan & Lynda Jardine)
Part Three: "California"
(A. Jardine)

SIDE TWO

"Hold On Dear Brother"
(R. Fataar — B. Chapin)
"Make It Good"
(D. Wilson — D. Dragon)
"All This Is That"
(A. Jardine — C. Wilson —
M. Love)
"Cuddle Up"
(D. Wilson — D. Dragon)

Brother MS 2118

SIDE TWO

"The Trader"
(C. Wilson — J. Rieley)
"Leavin' This Town"
(R. Fataar — C. Wilson —
B. Chapin; add. lyrics —
M. Love)
"Only With You"
(D. Wilson — M. Love)
"Funky Pretty"
(B. Wilson — M. Love; add.
lyrics — J. Rieley)

"Mount Vernon and Fairway" — A Fairy Tale in Several
Parts (Brian Wilson; add. material Jack Rieley) comprises a
seven-inch LP included with the album.

The Beach Boys In Concert (1973)
Brother 2RS 6484

SIDE ONE

"Sail On Sailor"
"Sloop John B."
"The Trader"
"You Still Believe In Me"
"California Girls"
"Darlin' "

SIDE THREE

"Funky Pretty"
"Let the Wind Blow"
"Help Me, Rhonda"
"Surfer Girl"
"Wouldn't It Be Nice"

SIDE TWO

"Marcella"
"Caroline, No"
"Leavin' This Town"
"Heroes and Villains"

SIDE FOUR

"We Got Love"
"Don't Worry Baby"
"Surfin' U.S.A."
"Good Vibrations"
"Fun, Fun, Fun"

In addition, there are several anthology albums available
on separate labels. Only one, however, merits the interest of
anyone collecting Beach Boy music: the album including their
earliest work.

The Best of the Beach Boys

SIDE ONE

"Surfer Girl"
"Barbee"
(Morgan)
"Luau"
(Morgan)
"Little Deuce Coupe"
"Surfin' "

SIDE TWO

"Surfin' Safari"
"Judy"
(B. Wilson)
"What Is A Young Girl"
(Morgan)
"409"
"Karate"
(B. Wilson)

This album has appeared on at least three different
labels: Scepter, Springboard, and Orbit. The contents remain
the same.

Other anthologies issued both in this country and abroad exist, but the material in every case simply repeats what is available elsewhere. One import album bears notice, however. It is a concert recorded at the Royal Albert Hall in London, 1969:

The Beach Boys Live In London

Capitol SC 054 80627

SIDE ONE

"Darlin' "
 "Wouldn't It Be Nice"
 "Sloop John B."
 "California Girls"
 "Do It Again"
 "Wake The World"
 "Aren't You Glad"

SIDE TWO

"Bluebirds Over the
 Mountains"
 "Their Hearts Were Full
 Of Spring"
 "Good Vibrations"
 "God Only Knows"
 "Barbara Ann"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is no full-length study of the Beach Boys. Although the group is usually mentioned in studies of rock 'n' roll and rock music, they have received desultory treatment. This situation may be changing, however. As the music created in America since the mid-fifties begins to sound more interesting by comparison to the growing popularity of contemporary disco-muzak, some critics and historians of popular culture are reconsidering the voices from the exciting days of the sixties. This tendency can be observed, for instance, in Greil Marcus. *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1975). His remarks on the Beach Boys are positive, if patronizing. Their sin, apparently, is their "cool"; like many critics of rock music, Mr. Marcus prefers his performers to reveal (or at least suggest) depths of emotion while they relive or ponder in their writing and singing the recurring dilemmas about American life. The Beach Boys' polish, which he admires for its breadth and sweep, unfortunately suggests to him their lack of perception. I have argued that their music suggests somewhat more than the mindless contemplation of a never-setting sun, or simple meditation to learn the truth of the imperturbable Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Carl Belz, *The Story of Rock* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969) pp. 96-101. The Beach Boys are treated as an extension of folk music. Even though the group recorded several albums after the date of his first edition, Mr. Belz takes no note of this work for his second edition issued in 1972.

Robert Christgau, *Any Old Way You Choose It: Rock and Other Pop Music, 1966-1973* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1973). Scattered through this collection of essays and reviews are incisive remarks on The Beach Boys. Unfortunately there is no single article on them.

Nik Cohn, *Rock: From the Beginning* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), pp. 118-123. This is an overstated, hyper-description of the group's surfing and car music from an English writer's point of view. Entertaining to read, but not always accurate.

Ben Edmonds, "The Beach Boys," *Rock Revolution*, ed. Richard Robinson, et. al. (New York: Curtis Books, 1973) pp. 75-77. Favorable criticism of their work, mostly about *Pet Sounds*.

John Gabree, *The World of Rock* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968) pp. 143-144. The first book-length essay on rock music; not as informative as Arnold Shaw's study — which appeared the following year — but more opinionated. The Beach Boys are complimented, but the criticism is reductive.

Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll*, 1970 (rev. ed. New York: Dell, 1972) pp. 293-294. This is the fullest study of the subject, but it describes the Beach Boys only as a "surfing sound" group, ignoring their development beyond 1965.

Mike Jahn, *Rock: From Elvis Presley to the Rolling Stones* (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1973). Because the book is arranged chronologically, his discussion of The Beach Boys is disjointed, and repetitious, and not always accurate. Written in a cloying style, Jahn's argument stresses the superficial quality of the lyrics while underestimating their musical achievement.

Tom Nolan, "The Beach Boys: A California Saga," *Rolling Stone*, No. 94 (Oct. 28, 1971), 32-39; No. 95 (Nov. 11, 1971), 50-52 with additional material by David Felton. The first part is valuable for the remarks of Nick Venet, who signed the group for Capitol. He points out Brian's importance in opening up the California recording industry, helping to make it a center for innovation. The second part is mostly an interview with Murray Wilson, the father of three Beach Boys. If the members of the group have become reclusive, these articles suggest why.

Jon Landau, *It's Too Late To Stop Now: A Rock and Roll Journal* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972) pp. 82-86. A valuable description of their 1971 Boston Symphony Hall concert, along with a positive appraisal of their work up to that time. A short, but favorable review of *Surf's Up* follows.

Lillian Roxon, *Rock Encyclopedia*, 1969 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971) A fundamental book. Although it slights some important figures from the late fifties and early sixties, she treats the Beach Boys seriously with both accuracy and respect up to 1969. She lists a helpful but not entirely accurate discography through 1969.

Arnold Shaw, *The Rock Revolution*, 1969 (New York: Paperback Library, 1971) pp. 156-159. An accurate, perceptive and generally informative book, not only on the Beach Boys but popular music in general.

Stars and Superstars of Rock (London: Octopus Books, Ltd., 1974) pp. 144-148. Recently, several oversize picture books from England on rock music have been made available in this country. This compilation is opinionated, but interesting; unfortunately, certain errors betray careless writing (Hawthorne, California, is near Los Angeles, not San Francisco). It is valuable for its illustrations, however.

Paul Williams, *Outlaw Blues: A Book of Rock Music* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1969) pp. 117-169. A long conversation with Dave Anderle, this piece rambles all over in celebrating Brian Wilson's talent. Probably the most adulatory writing on the Beach Boys ever published.

NOTES

Page 8, Line 36

"Significant changes . . . in "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." See Arnold Shaw, *The Rockin' 50's* New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc. 1974) p. 137. An interview with Haley follows.

Page 9, Line 13

"Movements on the program." For Elvis on the Steve Allen Show, see Jerry Hopkins, *Elvis: A Biography* 1971 (New York: Warner Paperback Library, 1972) pp. 127-128.

Page 11, Line 30

"popular dancing." See Marshall and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* (New York: the Macmillan Company, London: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1968).

Page 14, Line 32

"The classic pastoral." See Renato Poggioli, *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge: Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1975).

Page 14, Line 42

"American Thought and Letters." See Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Page 16, Line 16 The record producer is Terry Melcher. See Tom Nolan, "The Beach Boys: A California Sage," *Rolling Stone*, No. 94 (Oct. 28, 1971), 32-39.

Page 19, Line 16 "car songs were no novelty." The tradition goes back as far as Robert Johnson's great "Terraplane Blues." See Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* (New York: E.P. Dutton, and Co., Inc., 1975) p. 26.

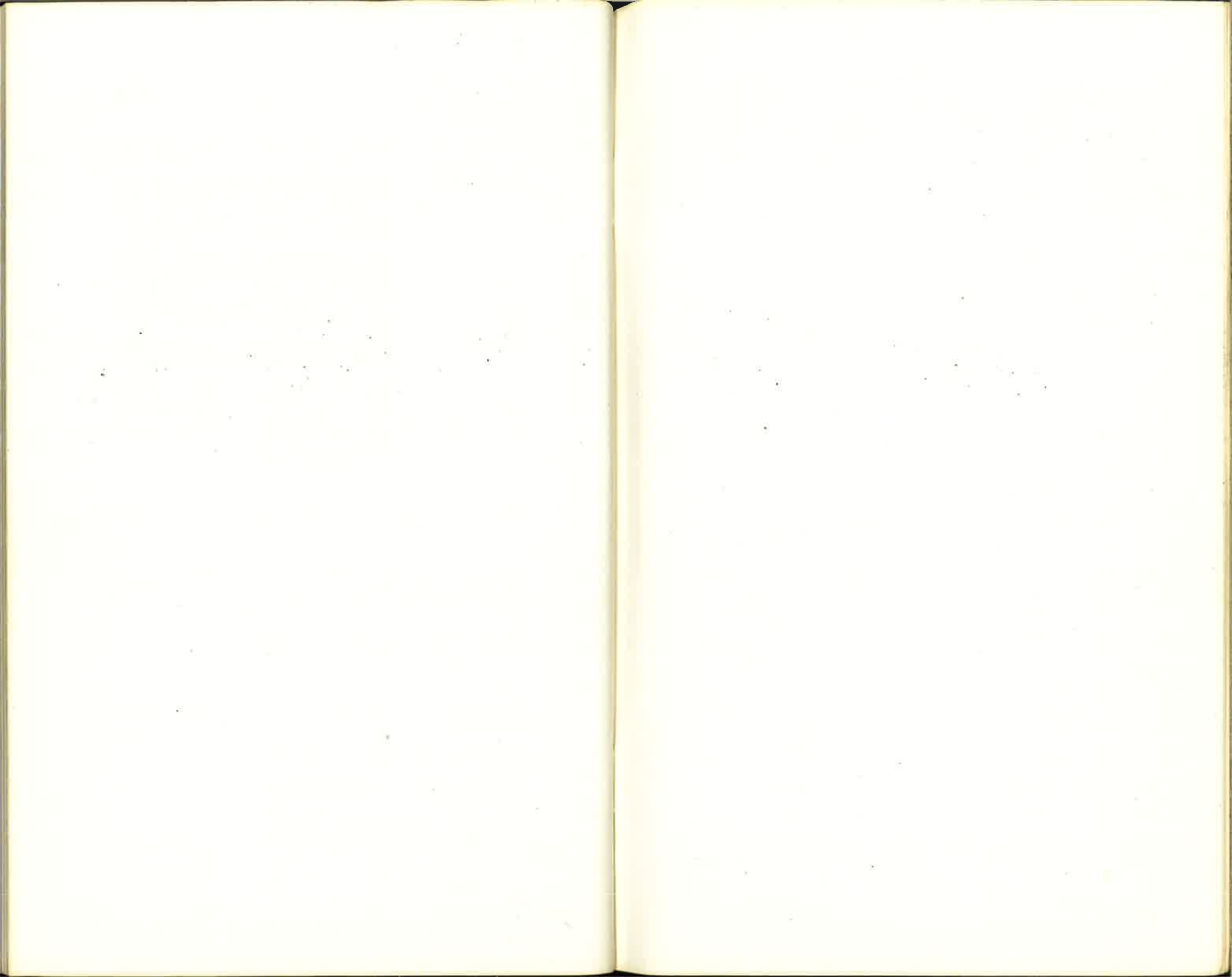
Page 23, Line 39 "experiments with a full orchestra." *The Beach Boys Christmas Album*, used a full orchestra, but Brian did none of those arrangements.

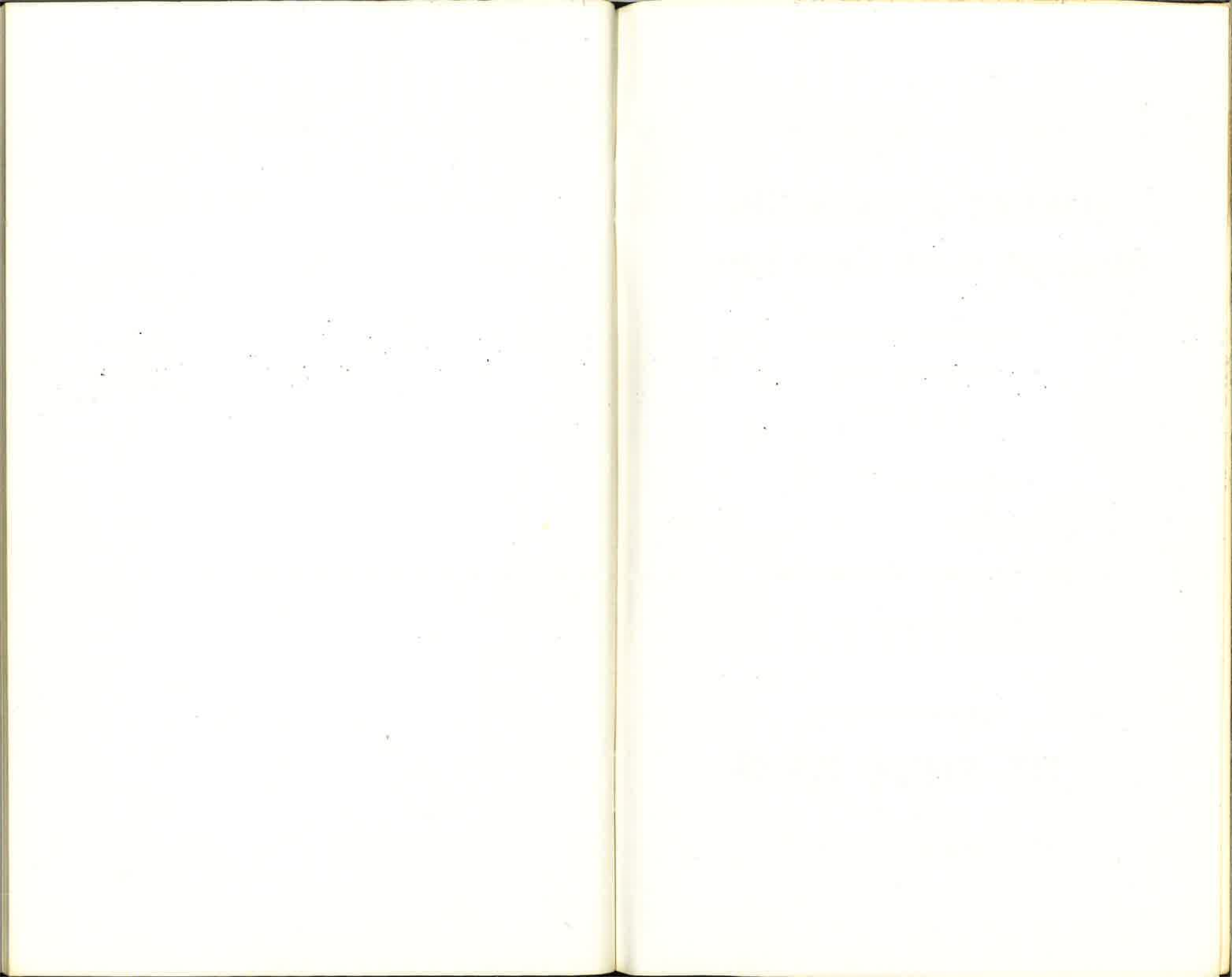
Page 35, Line 21 "in collaboration." See the Tom Nolan *Rolling Stone* story cited above.

Page 35, Line 25 "involved with the Manson clan," See Vincent Bugliosi, with Curt Gentry, *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1974), pp 250-251.

Page 37, Line 13 "Disney Girls (1957)" is almost the epitome of a pastoral song. See Renato Poggioli's study, cited above, where he argues that psychologically, the pastoral represents a two-fold yearning after both happiness and innocence, states of mind recoverable by retreating without undergoing either conversion or regeneration.

Page 39, Line 5 "now recognizes America." See the conclusion in F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, for a striking use of a reference to Holland as a perspective from which to gaze on America. "And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that had flowered once for Dutch sailor's eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world." Greil Marcus quotes this passage incompletely in his *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* as he argues that much rock 'n' roll music also emphasizes "The promise of American life." (p. 22).





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THE BEACH BOYS

The Beach Boys are one of the most accomplished and undervalued groups working in Rock Music today. Their distinctive sound and outlook, which began as smooth, polished, suburban high-school Southern California surfing music in the early 1960s has now grown to the point where, in their hit LP of 1973, *The Beach Boys Holland*, the "California Saga" combines the melodious poetry of Robinson Jeffers with the lilting music of Mike Love and Al Jardine. Exuberance has always been their trademark. You knew they liked what they were singing about, whether it was the surf, cars, or girls. In fact, The Beach Boys were a major factor in turning Southern California from just another place into a cultural lifestyle that epitomized what is now called "youth culture." Their more than twenty albums span a decade of tension, upheaval, and turmoil, but somehow managed to survive those tumultuous times with undiminished spirit and vigor. And today, when so many voices of acid rock or protest have fallen by the wayside, The Beach Boys remain as a comforting representative of the open, generous, life-enhancing spirit of American and Californian life.

BRUCE GOLDEN is an Associate Professor of English at California State College, San Bernardino. His annual class in rock and popular music has grown from 24 students in 1969 to more than 240 in 1975, the seating capacity of the largest study hall on the Cal State campus. Dr. Golden is a member of the California Folklore Society.



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